

Duxbury Clipper
P. 1
Dec. 3, 2014

Read sued in Hanson

Ten-count lawsuit filed against Town Manager

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Town Manager RenRead has been named in a lawsuit filed in federal court last month. The lawsuit targets Read, the town of Hanson where Read was formerly the town administrator, and Steven Cappellini, Sr. and Scott Capellini, both residents of Hanson. The lawsuit, brought by Tom Constantine and Richard Edgehill, seeks redress for "substantial violations of their rights pursuant to the state and federal civil rights acts as well as under the Massachusetts Whistleblower Act," according to a federal court filing made by attorney Timothy M. Burke on behalf of Constantine, former Health Board Chairman, and Edgehill, current Health Board member.

The lawsuit includes several claims against Read, including that he began to "insult and disparage Constantine and his job performance" after Constantine contacted Read in 2011 to complain about a skunk that had been disposed of in the Town's Transfer Station. According to the lawsuit, Constantine contacted Read via email, requesting that he advise the Hanson animal control officer to cease and desist the practice of dumping dead skunks in the transfer station.

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RenRead

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Read under fire

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The lawsuit also claims that in November 2011, Constantine and Edgheille filed a formal complaint to Read, stating the fire exit doors in the selectmen's meeting room were in violation of the state fire codes. According to the lawsuit, Read "refused to respond to the plaintiffs' concerns regarding the condition of the fire exit doors and the Town's violation of the state fire and sanitary codes." After not receiving a response from Read, Constantine and Edgheille contacted Richard Flynn, a Hanson selectman and contractor and asked him to repair the broken door. Constantine and Flynn made the necessary repairs and, two days later, observed that all of the weather stripping that had been installed had been removed. According to the lawsuit, Constantine was informed that the custodians had removed the stripping upon the order of Read. The lawsuit alleges that Read contacted Constantine and said he had committed a crime by putting up weather stripping.

Constantine and Edgheille had a formal inspection done and the town was found in violation of the state sanitary and fire codes. The lawsuit also alleges that Read insisted on drafting job descriptions for the health agent and administrative assistant positions, despite claims from Constantine and Edgheille that that was the responsibility of the Board of Health. The plaintiffs and another member of the board voted unanimously to hire Donna Tramontana for the position of administrative assistant. Shortly thereafter, the lawsuit claims, the town hired Matthew Tanis as Health Agent. The plaintiffs claim it became apparent to them that Tanis did not have the qualifications to perform the job well and they questioned his qualifications. The lawsuit alleges Read recommended Tanis file a hostile work environment claim against Constantine.

The 10-point complaint accuses Read, the town of Hanson, Capellini, Sr., and Capellini of civil rights violations, conspiracy, intentional infliction of emotional distress, assault and battery, among other counts.

Read said he had no comment about the lawsuit. When asked if he would be retaining an attorney, he said, "No."

A jury trial has been requested on all counts in the lawsuit.

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